

Diamond Rock Schoolhouse  
Northwest corner of Yellow Springs Road  
(LR 15050) and Diamond Rock Hill  
Road, approximately 2.5 miles north of  
Paoli  
Paoli Vicinty (Tredyffrin Township)  
Chester County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-207

HABS  
PA,  
15-PAOL.V,  
2-

PHOTOGRAPH

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

## DIAMOND ROCK SCHOOL

HABS PA,15-PAOL.V,2-

Location:

Northeast Corner of County Road #15108 and County Road #15050, Tredyffrin Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania (Reference: Map of Chester County [by County Commissioners] 1956).

Present Owner:

Diamond Rock Old Pupils Association, c/o Mrs. Ralph Thomas, Malvern, Pa.

Brief Statement of Significance:

This octagonal school house, built in 1818 by a group of local people, chiefly of Welsh and German descent, was in use until 1864. In 1918 it was restored by an association formed by descendants of the former students and is at present maintained by them as a historic building.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: Land was leased for 999 years, or as long as the school was used as such. After that it was to revert to the family of the leasor, George Beaver, Jr. When the school ceased in 1864 this was done. In 1918 when the building had been put into good shape again, a descendant, George Wersler, deeded the land and building to the association above, chartered in Pennsylvania; and they now own it.
2. Date of erection: 1818.
3. Architect, builder, suppliers etc.: Unknown.
4. Original plans, construction etc.: Octagonal buildings were erected by the neighborhood by subscriptions, and were used until 1864.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: Very little was ever done to this building, except the restoration in 1918 by the Diamond Rock Old Scholars Association.
6. Important old views and references:  
Views: Numerous views from 1900 on are to be found in the Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pa.  
References: Sources of information, to be found in the Chester County Historical Society, in Classified printed and manuscript files: Tredyffrin Township Public Schools - Diamond Rock.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: The building was erected by a group of local people, chiefly of Welsh and German descent, for school purposes on land leased for a term of 999 years by George Beaver, Jr., to a group of trustees as tenants in common

The building was also used for neighborhood purposes. The descendants of the former students have formed an association which meets annually and whose purpose it is to maintain this early 19th century octagonal school.

An attempt is being made (1958) to gather relics of the school and to keep it open on Sunday afternoons for visitors during the warmer months.

C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: None known.

D. Supplemental Material:

1. "Messenger", Phoenixville, Pa., March 6, 1909:

History of the Diamond Rock School House.  
Written by Miss Emma W. Wersler

"Still sits the school-house by the road;  
A ragged beggar sunning;  
Around it still the sumach grows,  
And black-berry vines are running."

"We could almost imagine that our gentle Quaker poet had the Old Diamond Rock School-house in mind when he wrote this poem, so aptly does the description apply. For, like a way-worn traveler the old school-house stands at the intersection of the Diamond Rock Road with that leading to the Yellow Springs.

"Its gaping windows and door.  
Its charcoal frescoed walls"

tell mute stories of the progress of time, and of the men and women of yesterday, who, as the lads and lassies of seventy-five years ago, conned their "Conly Spellers" and frowned over the intricacies of the "Rule of Three," or built air castles while they decorated the desks and seats with

"The Jack-knife's carved initials;"

or held high carnival around its many corners.

"But alas! Time, the destroyer, has gathered them nearly all into his sheaf; some with their ambitions realized and others in the early bloom of life's morning. But the old school-house still stands a monument of the past. In these busy rushing days, it is a good omen when men are willing to pause and look back over the days that have gone by, and are trying to perpetuate the things that have stood for the moral uplift of the community.

"The early settlers of our beautiful valley were mostly German and Welsh, and they had a strong love and desire for learning. Hence we can understand how their descendants, who were the grandfathers and fathers of the men and women of the present day, inherited this desire, and were willing to give of their substance to further its end.

"Hence in January, 1818, the good people of this section awoke to the necessity of having better school facilities.

"No exact record exists of the town meetings till January, 1813; at that meeting it was decided to erect a building for school purposes.

"George Beaver set aside twenty (20) perches of land at the intersection of two principal roads as a building site for that purpose.

"No more commanding site could have been selected. Protected on the north by the valley hills, the view to the south and west is one of pastoral beauty. The broad farms and well built homes breathe an air of peace and plenty. The money for construction of the building was raised by subscription.

"On the old list we find the names Jacob Beidler, Ezekiel Potts, James Sloan, Israel Davis, Joseph Wilson, Jacob Rickabaugh, John Ridabaugh, Jacob Rennard, Charles Rowland, Samuel Jones, George Daniel, John Beaver and many others whose names were familiar in the early history of the valley.

"The subscriptions ranged from fifty (50) cents to thirty (30) dollars. Some, who were not able to subscribe money, donated labor, in the way of hauling, carpentering and mason work. The total cost in money seems to have been two hundred and fifty-eight dollars and thirty-five cents (\$258.35); an amount greatly in contrast with the cost of our modern structures. Just why the architect planned the octagon shape is a matter for conjecture; but, standing as it does on a tongue of land, possibly this style best suited the location. The fact that it has withstood the elements for nearly a century speaks well for the artisans of that day.

"The furniture consisted of long desks with benches for seats. The pupils sat facing the wall and the windows. The door was flanked on either side by open cupboards for the kettles and dinner baskets; but no provision was made for clothing beyond a few pegs.

"In the middle of the room stood a large tenplate stove with a capacious door that would admit a good sized log. The sawing and splitting of the wood for this stove formed a drill in athletics that is not in fashion in our modern schools. The building was opened in the spring of 1813. During the winter term at times, as many as sixty scholars attended. They were mostly young men and women, as the younger children were only allowed to go during the spring and fall."

2. From Original Manuscript in possession of The Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pa.

1818 Diamond Rock Schoolhouse Dr.	D C
To Mason work	46.00
To Carpenters Bill	70.00
To Sawyers Bill	10.00
To Wm Scholfield for lime	12.00
To Smith's Bill	3.75
To Pine boards	9.25
To Store Bill	6.03
To hinges & screws	3.96
To Stove	18.00
To Nails	5.60

To Brick	4.00
To Shingles & boards	53.84
To white lead	2.00
To hawling boards	4.50
To hawling	1.50
To brush, Buckets, tin & lock	1.37 $\frac{1}{2}$
To Plaisterer's Bill	<u>9.12<math>\frac{1}{2}</math></u>
	260.93

1818	Contra	Cr.	D	C
By	Subscription per Jacob Beidler		32.00	
By	Do pr. Ezekiel Potts		6.00	
By	Do Wm. Potts		10.00	
By	Do James Sloan		22.00	
By	Do Jacob Longacre		9.50	
By	Do John Beaver		11.00	
By	Do Israel Davis		9.00	
By	Do David Beaver		15.00	
By	Do Ann McKinn		1.00	
By	Do Joseph Watson		6.00	
By	Do John Campbell		3.00	
By	Do John Dempsey		5.50	
By	Do Henry Place		3.00	
By	Do Jacob Steward		4.00	
By	Do Jesse Moore		5.00	
By	Do Philip Clair		8.00	
By	Do Benjamin Clair		1.00	
By	Do John Shriver		5.00	
By	Do John Hawk		3.00	
By	Do John Rickabaugh		3.00	
By	Do Wm Banks		3.00	
By	Do Adam Hunon		2.50	
By	Do Jacob Rickabaugh		12.00	
By	Do Jonathan Brooke		2.50	
By	Do John Miller		3.00	
By	Do John Steward		5.50	
By	Do James Steward		3.00	
By	Do Erasmus Caver		.50	
By	Do Jacob Rennard		2.00	
By	Do David Ruth		6.00	
By	Do Adam Rickabaugh		14.00	
By	Do John Rugler Sen		5.00	
By	Do Samuel Jones		5.00	
By	Do Charles Rowland		3.00	
By	Do Daniel Beaver		2.00	
By	Do Wm Scholfield		4.74	
By	Do John Berck		2.00	
By	Do Thos. Dempsey		2.50	
By	Do Jonathan Adamson		5.00	
By	Do Jonathan Rowland		2.00	
By	Do Jacob Weisler		5.00	
By	Do Mace Richardson		5.00	
By	Do George Beaver		2.00	

By	Do	David Chowalter	4.00
By	Do	Seneca Radcliff	2.00
By	Do	Daniel Swabrentrove	3.50
By	Do	Wm. Hughes	2.00
By	Do	David Stephens	2.00
By	Do	Jacob Detwiler	1.50
			<u>264.24</u>

Prepared by Bart Anderson - August 1958  
Curator, Chester County Historical Society

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: Very little was ever done to change the original design of the building, and in 1918 it was restored by the Diamond Rock Old Scholars Association.
2. Condition of Fabric: Excellent.

### B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: This octagonal building is one story and 10' on a side.
2. Foundations: Stone.
3. Wall construction: Stone.
4. Chimneys: Center chimney, which is a replacement.
5. Openings
  - a. Doorways and doors: There is the original opening, but the frame and door are replacements.
  - b. Windows and shutters: There are seven original openings and frames, although the shutters are replacements.
6. Roof
  - a. Shape, covering: Peak roof with eight sides; wood shingles.
  - b. Cornice, eaves: These are a replacement.
  - c. Dormers: None.

### C. Technical Description of Interiors

1. Floor Plans: One room has desks to the walls; the students faced the walls. The stove is in the center.

2. Stairways: None.
3. Flooring: Flooring is mostly replaced.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: Replacement.
6. Trim: There is no original trim.
7. Hardware: There is no original hardware.
8. Lighting: None.
9. Heating: Heating was by a stove originally.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: Well placed on south slope of Diamond Rock, the building faces south.
2. Enclosures: None.
3. Outbuildings: None.
4. Walks, driveways etc.: None.
5. Landscaping, gardens etc.: Neatly planted.

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